

July 18, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

**EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM
QUARTERLY REPORT**

On July 17, 2001, your Board instructed my office to oversee a number of activities related to improving the administration of the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP). We provided an initial report on our progress on September 26, 2001, the first quarterly status report on January 7, 2002, and the second quarterly status report on April 18, 2002.

The attached report (Attachment I) summarizes the key activities conducted to strengthen the County's ES/ILP program during the third quarter. As outlined in our previous report, the recommendations included in Sharon Watson's August 28, 2001 report on ES/ILP, as well as the Los Angeles County Economy and Efficiency Commission's February 2002 recommendations, are included in the Emancipation Interim Team's (Team) Workplan.

As you will see, a great deal has been accomplished in each area of focus. This is due primarily to the fact that the Team has been fully staffed (since mid-February), the Design Team has been fully operational (also since February), and Michael Olenick, the new DCFS ILP Program Division Chief, came on board effective February 3, 2002. The Design Team, with our many public and private partners, has become a true collaboration with all members solidly invested in making the County's ILP program work at an optimal level. The collaborative efforts are clearly evidenced in this quarter's report.

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Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information, or your staff may contact Kathy House at (213) 974-1323.

DEJ:DL:WLW
SGW:KH:lbm
Attachment

Enclosures:

- ES/ILP Workplan Timeline
- Draft list of Alumni Center Service Components
- Draft Role/Responsibility Shift for ILP Coordinators and Community Workers
- Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) Chart Contrasting Existing Policy with the Proposed Process
- "Bridges to the Future" Mentoring Program Brochure
- "Foster and Emancipated Youth Summer Program" Flyer
- First pages of ILP Website (under construction)
- Draft ILP Program Outcomes and Indicators List

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel (w/o enclosures)
 Chief Probation Officer (w/o enclosures)
 Director, Children and Family Services (w/o enclosures)
 Director, Community and Senior Services (w/o enclosures)
 Director, Consumer Affairs (w/o enclosures)
 Director, Health Services (w/o enclosures)
 Director, Mental Health (w/o enclosures)
 Director, Public Social Services (w/o enclosures)
 Executive Director, Community Development Commission (w/o enclosures)

EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM THIRD QUARTER STATUS REPORT

Work plan Achievements:

1. Program and Services to Youth:

A. Create a Countywide Network of Alumni Centers

- The components (Core and Recommended Enhancements) of an Alumni Center have been developed.
- At least one possible initial collaborative partnership with an existing service provider in each SPA has been identified, including two or three Community and Senior Services (CSS) Worksource Centers, two Casey Family Program sites, Mount San Antonio College, Whittier Community Resource Center, Antelope Valley Partners for Health, and Partners Assisting the Homeless. A master plan for securing at least two sites in each SPA is being developed, which will include both public and private partners and a variety of funding sources.

B. Simplify and Strengthen Case Planning for Eligible Youth

- Probation added nine additional staff to their ILP program, including a Director, six ILP Coordinators and two Clerks. They also created an ILP manual for departmental staff.
- Finalized a revised Roles and Responsibilities Statement for Children's Social Workers (CSW) and Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) with respect to ES/ILP eligible caseload youth, DCFS and Probation ILP Coordinators, and DCFS Community Workers in the soon-to-be decentralized service delivery system.
- DCFS developed a performance improvement plan that ensures that Transitional Independent Living Plans (TILP) are routinely completed for all foster youth, ages 14 years and older, and then updated every six months.
- Probation created a TILP Team to complete, in a timely manner, plans on all of their eligible youth.

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- Consolidated the TILP, 5200 (Emancipation Checklist), 5205-B (Emancipation Contract) documents into a slightly expanded TILP and will soon eliminate the 414 (Assessment/Referral of Youth for Independent Living Program).
- Convened planning team for ES/ILP training needs. Team is addressing training needs related to TILP planning for staff and caregivers.
 - Initiated planning for a foster youth and caregiver conference for the Fall of 2002. A DCFS point person has been identified to convene a planning group and take responsibility for the conference.
 - Developed a 20 minute video from youth focus group conversations that compellingly conveys youth needs and their point of view on life.
 - Conducted an initial half-day training seminar pilot on June 28th for CSWs, managers and Probation staff to present/explain the new TILP form and requirements and streamlined case-planning process. Two additional test sessions have been scheduled, one for Regional Administrators and one for Emancipation Division staff. Training will be offered to all regional staff, beginning in August.
 - Designing a comprehensive training curriculum to communicate the enhanced ES/ILP program for regional offices and the CSW Training Academy.

C. Develop Mentorship Programs for Eligible Youth, especially those with Special Needs

- Developed a partnership between DCFS, Probation, and the Los Angeles County Bar Association to re-establish the “Bridges to the Future” program which will provide mentors for youth, ages 17-19, who are transitioning out of the system. A Mentoring Coordinator has been recruited to work with the Bar Association to re-establish and properly implement this program. A reception for prospective mentors is scheduled for September 5th, an orientation session on September 28th for those selected, and an expected kick-off in late October or early November.

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- Members of the Design Team are also collaborating with several existing mentorship programs targeting foster youth, working with the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, developing a recruitment strategy and a training curriculum for a network of mentorship programs for Los Angeles County youth, and putting together a resource directory.
- Special Needs youth who would benefit the most from being paired with mentors are currently being identified.

D. Create a Strong, Integrated, Countywide Housing Program

- Developed a first draft of a strategic action plan for "Meeting the Housing Needs of Emancipating Foster Youth in Los Angeles County." This Plan estimates the number of young adults in need of housing upon emancipation, where they are located by SPA, and what their characteristics are. It then outlines the need for various types of housing for these youth, including short-term, service-enriched housing programs (i.e. transitional housing), permanent housing and emergency shelter, pointing out the importance of consistent staff support to these youth and centralized coordination for this housing "system." Finally, a detailed strategy for addressing this array of housing needs is proposed.
- Begun initial work on developing and maintaining a comprehensive database of existing programs and beds.
- Made strong efforts during the past two months to add two critical components to our current programs. First, we investigated providing emergency housing vouchers – for up to five nights of housing – to homeless youth between the ages of 18-21, while other housing arrangements are being secured. While we could not address all the details quickly enough to use FY 2001-02 funds for this venture, we should be able to finalize details (i.e., complete negotiations with two or three selected hotels, arrange for support for these youth and providers, develop criteria, procedures and venues for disbursing the vouchers, etc.) by the end of August. Second, we attempted to hire two "Apartment Locators" who could find and negotiate suitable apartments for emancipating youth through our Room and Board Assistance and HUD Section 8 Housing Programs. These apartments could also be used by other Los Angeles County Housing Programs. While this effort could not be

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realized this fiscal year, this capacity will be included in the Housing Resources RFP that will be issued in late summer (see below).

- Set priorities to meet the housing needs of eligible Los Angeles County youth for the next two to three years. An RFP for approximately \$2 million – about 40% of available annual funding – is now being drafted to solicit proposals from community-based providers to secure additional programs/resources in these priority areas. We are currently pursuing a possible partnership among DCFS, the Los Angeles Community Development Commission (CDC) and Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to conduct the RFP process and contract management functions.
- DCFS, DMH and CDC created a protocol for community outreach for transitional housing for special needs youth, implemented that protocol in the cities of San Gabriel and Alhambra, and developed interim certification standards for these housing programs.
- Working with Consumer Affairs to develop a life skills training component for emancipated foster youth in transitional housing programs.
- DMH applied for 50 slots, under HUD's Shelter Plus Care program, for homeless emancipated foster youth with mental health disabilities. This program provides permanent, service-enriched housing that is renewable every five years.
- United Friends of the Children (UFC) is starting a new service-enriched transitional housing program – Pathways – in September. It will utilize 40 beds at two existing UFC sites in Whittier. Emancipated foster youth, ages 18-23 – including those from the Probation system – will be eligible for the Pathways program. UFC-trained and supervised social workers ("youth advocates") will deliver direct services on a ratio of 13 youth per worker. Significant mental health support and counseling services will be provided, as well as both an on-site career counselor and college counselor.
- Making efforts to make the best use of existing resources. DCFS has, for example, taken several actions to improve the functioning of the Bridges to Independence – Transitional Housing Program (THP). A new manager is in charge of the

program; intakes are now being conducted in Regional offices in addition to the DCFS housing unit in Culver City; 20 additional beds were obtained and the occupancy rate increased from 70% to 84%; the partnership contract with UFC was renewed; and a meeting was recently held with HUD to ask for technical assistance and to express our desire to improve the program. In addition, DCFS is working on expanding selection criteria for the program so that—in addition to youth who are working or attending school—those who are interested in pursuing employment and/or school can now also be accommodated. In addition, those youth who are attempting to earn a GED are now eligible—not just those working on a high school diploma. Further, strong outreach efforts by the Design Team to youth and their caretakers has significantly increased the number of youth participating in the Room and Board Assistance program and DCFS has clarified to housing staff that youth may receive this assistance even if they are simultaneously receiving SSI.

E. Integrate and Expand Youth Employment Programs

- Collaborated with the Executive Office to help structure and promote their “Foster and Emancipated Youth Summer Program,” which capitalizes on the April 30th Board motion waiving the hiring freeze for summer jobs for student workers and exempting current and former foster youth from the freeze. Through this program, two youth were hired for student worker and professional student worker summer positions in the Executive Office where, through extensive mentoring and training, they will be provided the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive as County government employees as well as helped to develop the good work habits necessary to succeed in an office environment. This program was so enthusiastically embraced by professionals currently working with foster youth that, with only four days available for outreach by the Design Team, 48 resumes of highly recommended youth were received. The Team is now exploring ways to encourage other County departments to adopt similar programs.
- Working with DHR to develop additional employment opportunities for foster youth within Los Angeles County government, including a possible on-the-job mentoring program that pairs County staff with foster youth.
- Exploring a partnership between DCFS, Probation and CSS to connect and expand existing programs to prepare foster youth

for employment and place them in jobs. Ideally, this endeavor would integrate ILP Skills Centers with Alumni Centers and some Worksource/WIA sites to create a continuum of employment readiness/career preparation and job placement services and consolidate at least some administrative functions.

2. Administration/Management:

A. Establish a Comprehensive ES/ILP Communications Capacity

- Design Team members, in conjunction with DCFS and Probation ILP Coordinators, have now arranged and participated in over 35 outreach meetings/events across the County since January, involving approximately 2,000 people from all stakeholder groups.
- Translated the ES/ILP Information Bulletin into Spanish for use at these community meetings/events.
- Created a first draft of an ES/ILP Source Book that will serve as the central source of program information for training materials, public outreach documents, and youth website content.
- Executed a one-year contract with the C3B Group for developing, hosting and maintaining a youth-oriented website for the ES/ILP program. The first phase of the website has been designed with the help of a host of stakeholders, including several former foster youth. We anticipate that the website will “go live” by the end of July. In the meantime, it is available for preview and comments at: www.treepilot.com/TreePilotClient?SysType=ILP while under construction.
- Developed a website Enhancement Plan that will be implemented in FY 2002-03, as funds are available. The first priority is for the complete website to be translated into Spanish with a summary edition available in six other threshold languages – Armenian, Cambodian, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin and Vietnamese. Other priorities include: two-way communication columns, chat rooms, and e-mail exchange; PDF conversion utility so that printed materials can be produced directly from the website; online survey capabilities; online form processing; and free e-mail addresses via the website for all eligible foster youth, beginning at age 14, that will serve as a tracking platform and a means to promote long-term contact.

B. Develop a Data, Reporting and Tracking System for Eligible Youth

- Using Los Angeles County's Five Outcome Areas for children and youth – Good Health, Safety and Survival, Economic Well-being, Social and Emotional Well-being, and Education and Workforce Readiness – developed a set of outcome indicators that target both youth still in the foster care system (ages 14-18) as well as those who have emancipated (18-21). The information for each of these indicators is already being collected by public agencies or their contractors.
- Agreed on the overall capabilities, in order of priority, for an integrated, internet-based data tracking system for all eligible program youth. The first priority is to be able to identify and track all eligible youth, ages 14-21, including those under the supervision of DCFS and Probation, youth with finalized adoptions, KinGAP youth and emancipated youth. The second priority is that the system be user-friendly, allowing youth to enter any ILP office/program/alumni center and have access to past and present individual data/information. The third priority permits real-time updating of information from the field, including youth identifying information, services received, program participation/enrollment rates, etc. The fourth priority is to track all services received by program youth throughout their years of eligibility, and the fifth is the ability to measure the desired program outcomes. These first five priorities will be addressed in the initial, Phase One tracking system now being designed. Other priorities to be included in the second phase include: integrating youth-level and program data originating from all service providers – both County and non-County, the ability to case-manage youth and GEO-coding capabilities that will map where program youth and various service sites are located. This system will use data (upload) from existing sources such as CWS/CMS, negating the need for re-entry and duplicative processes.
- The Probation Department developed a pioneering tracking system for their ILP-eligible youth that will eventually link with the County's Juvenile Court Management System (JCMS) and, when it is operational, with the Los Angeles County tracking system. Data entry is now almost complete.
- Finalizing the database fields (i.e. demographic information, outcome indicators and ILP services, etc.) for the tracking

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system and the set of integrative youth, program and management reports that are to be generated.

- Under the leadership of the Services Integration Branch (SIB), we have defined the key barriers to tracking all categories of eligible youth, identified client- and service-level data currently collected by DCFS and Probation, determined new processes for enhancing tracking capabilities, defined tracking system users and identified technical system requirements. SIB is now preparing the tracking system business requirements and the Statement of Work that will go out for bid in August to prospective vendors.

C. Ensure an effective Budget Planning and Spending Process for Program funds

- Oversaw the spending of all FY 2001-02 program funds.
- Clarified and re-categorized ILP budget line items and reassigned code numbers for the spending plan to ensure accurate recording, tracking and processing.
- Added estimated-actual and balance-remaining columns to the ILP Spending Plan, beginning with FY 2001-02, to guide current spending and re-allocation of funds.
- Arranged for a comprehensive training session on May 21st for DCFS and Probation managers on how to properly receive and disburse gift certificates, vouchers and other negotiable items for program youth. This training was conducted by DCFS Finance staff with a curriculum approved by the Auditor-Controller. A second training session was held on June 13th for DCFS and Probation ILP staff.
- Developed policies and a set of instructions for ILP staff to access funds for program youth for each budget item.
- Completed an initial Budget Plan for FY 2002-03 that reflects the key priorities for the ES/ILP program – housing, education, employment preparation/training and life skills.
- Developed a draft list of available public (federal, State and County) and private funding sources for eligible youth.

D. Structure/Positioning/Sustainability of ES/ILP Program

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- Plans for de-centralizing ILP operations within DCFS, in order to improve transition-aged youth's access to services, are now being formulated.
- At its July 2nd meeting, the Team began to address the issue of sustainability – what infrastructure will be needed over the next few years to maintain current program gains and ensure future progress. An all-day Retreat is planned for July 23rd to fully consider all the issues involved and develop some initial ideas.

3. Other ES/ILP Program Accomplishments:

- Probation installed 95 computers in their camps as the first step to providing ILP services to these youth. In addition, they are now offering ILP classes at Dorothy Kirby Center.
- A Los Angeles Team, made up of DCFS, Probation, and Casey Family Program managers, participated in the first two segments of the Casey Leadership Mastery Program. This program is building strong public/private partnerships across the country, focusing on results-based accountability and performance measurements for transition-aged foster youth.
- Provided college scholarship funds to all 160 foster youth who participated in the Celebration I Graduation Ceremony held at the Kodak Theatre on June 3rd, and to 40 of the 250 Probation youth who participated in the Success Is Our Future event in May. All attendees at the upcoming Celebration II event will also receive scholarship monies.
- Through the collaborative work of the Interim Team, DCFS, Probation, Casey Family Programs and several Pasadena community-based organizations, a very successful "Summer Fiesta Dos" event was held last month. Almost 200 youth attended this outreach event for emancipating foster youth in SPA 3.

4. Program Development/Implementation Process:

The Design Team, which has been meeting every two weeks throughout the quarter, has become a true collaborative with all members solidly invested in making the County's ILP program work at an optimal level. Strong, productive relationships – with renewed trust and mutual respect – are now the norm, with all decisions made jointly on a consensus basis.

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The numerous achievements listed above are the direct result of the successful partnership that has been built among the 20 Design Team participants and its dozens of community partners.